ICE TL 1488-30

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR POEDJI KOENTARSO
HEAD OF THE INDONESIAN OBSERVER DELEGATION
UNDER ITEM 6
SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF
DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

GENEVA, 20 AUGUST 1987

Mr.Chairman,

Allow me to begin by extending my congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Sub-Commission and to the other members of the Bureau on their respective elections. My delegation takes the floor with some reluctance but it is obliged to do so in order to set the record straight about some of the issues referred to by certain speakers relating to human rights in my country. In providing clarifications in this respect, we hope that the members of the Sub-Commission will be able to draw their own objective conclusions. We are aware that circumstances call upon us to reiterate once again explanations which have been so amply clarified in the past but if these accusations are allowed to go unheeded, then they tend to be perceived as "facts", even by those who originally fabricated them .

The discussion of the so-called non-humanitarian question of East Timor in the UN, is already known to all. The matter was postponed for 4 consecutive years since 1982, as a reflection of the growing awareness of the real and true situation in the province. In the meantime, it is important to note that since 1982, a process of dialogue was started between the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Portugal at the UN under the auspices of the Secretary General in the search for a settlement to this question in the United Nations. Although Indonesia has consistently maintained that the exercise of self-determination and decolonization of the people of East Timor had already taken place in 1976, Indonesia's readiness to enter into such a dialogue was a reflection of its sincere desire and good faith to co-operate with the Secretary General in his endeavours.

The sweeping allegations from certain speakers that the situation in the province continues to deteriorate, that a new military offensive has been launched, that the war continues and that the population is continuing to die of hunger and other appallingly outrageous descriptions do not only contradict the true and prevailing situation in the province but are, indeed, simply fabricated as a result of their own imaginations just to support their political motivations. We do not believe that entertaining such baseless allegations will contribute to

../..

the work of the Sub-Commission and we thereby reject them. Nonetheless, we are always prepared to provide information to meet the genuine concern expressed by credible individuals and humanitarian organisations.

We would like to present in this respect Mr. Chairman, the following independent observations or reports which reveal how the accusations are completely divorced from reality.

a. A press conference held in Jakarta on 22 August 1986 by the Honorable Richard Lugar, Member of the United States' Senate, as reported by Reuters, where he stated inter alia:

"I am impressed by the sensitivity and the progress for those who live in that part of this country, and the openness to international observers, particularly the ICRC. The US has long been hopeful that kind of access can be consistent policy and it has been. I will carry back to my colleagues a good deal of information which I think many perhaps have not heard about."

b. Mr. Peter Hastings in his article "East Timor's War of Facts and Figures", published in the "Sydney Morning Herald" of 20th April 1987, which stated inter alia that:

"In East Timor, US Catholic Relief would be surprised to learn that 15,000 - 30,000 Indonesian troops are battling 2,500 Fretilin guerillas in East Timor or that 250,000 Timorese have died in the last 11 years or that the Indonesians plan a mass sterilisation programme.

The International Red Cross, very active in the island, has never reported such figures, nor has UNICEF, which has a major Australian funded programme in East Timor... deliberate exaggeration doesn't help us. Did 250,000 die ? I never met a more anti-Indonesian Timorean than Dili's former Apostolic Administrator, Monsignor da Costa Lopes. Even he - a priest of whom the Apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta said more in sorrow than in

../..

anger: "The monsignor is a good man who must add the zero to all figures attracting his attention" - rejected estimates of more than 100,000 mainly from famine and famine-related disease."

c. The on the spot reporting of the Portuguese journalist, Mr. Nuno Rocha who visited Indonesia , including the province of East Timor between 31 July and 3 August 1987, and whose positive findings were published in "Tempo" on 5th and 13th August which described the normal situation in the province. For this reason, he was prepared to fight for the truth concerning the true prevailing situation in the province.

With regard to the continuing progress of the province, the central Government remains faithful to its commitment to develop the region. To this end, it has introduced development programmes in education, public health, public works, public housing, agriculture, irrigation and communications. The high investment in this respect has brought substantial results in the province and this is marked by the increase of per capita income of the community, namely from US$ 40 in 1974 to US$ 160 in 1987. Several independent observers have confirmed the rapid growth in development in the last two years such as the visiting delegation of the Chief Ministers of the Northern Territory of Australia, an official of the Swedish Foreign Ministry and a member of the Mexican Federal Parliament, as well as highly reputable humanitarian agencies and organisations operating in the province.

Only Pax Romana which claims to be a humanitarian organisation is capable of underestimating the noble and productive work of the ICRC in the province. Does this organisation really follow the many aspects of the humanitarian activities of the ICRC in the province which can be easily read in the open publications of that organisation ? Or is this simply a case of pure jealousy since it has failed to be recognized as a respected and credible humanitarian organisation itself ?

Concerning the accusations made by the so-called Representative of West Papua, we cannot but simply reiterate in general our statement before the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. These calumnious

../..

allegations levelled against Indonesia have been made on many previous occasions and are based on over zealous agitation which is completely devoid of any sense of proportion. His statement merely reveals nothing more than his desperate efforts to revive the non-existent issue of creating an independent state by manipulating the sensitive issue of racial affinity. It must be deplored as this attempt is not only aimed at dismembering the territorial integrity of Indonesia but is also a dangerous form of adventurism, as has been proven in the course of recent history.

Similarly, the accusation that the objective of transmigration is directed against the interests of the indigenous people is preposterous. Indonesia's transmigration programme is a national endeavour in existence from the early days of independence and even before and is directed toward the expansion of national development and to ensure the even spread of its productive benefits to all regions of the country, in order to achieve nationally balanced economic progress. This programme is consciously implemented and takes fully into account the preservation of the various pluralistic characteristics of the regions within the framework of the national identity as well as the need for environmental protection.

Although there are admittedly some problems in implementing this programme, the Government of Indonesia has consistently followed the path of dialogue and consultations in dealing with any questions so that any negative effects could be avoided.

In regard to the question of "refugees" the so-called "OPM, Free Papuan Movement" and its supporters have twisted the facts by saying that thousands of "refugees" or a " mass exodus" at the border of Irian Jaya were caused by military repression. In fact, the border crossers are mainly composed of persons who have crossed into Papua New Guinea (PNG) as a result of provocation and threats instigated by a small separatist group around the border between Indonesia and PNG.

In this respect, it is pertinent to refer to the statement of Senator Teague of Australia, upon his return from a visit to the province in January 1986, as contained in the Press Release of the Australian Senate on 13 February 1986 in which he said inter alia that

../..

while it has been stated that transmigration was a major cause of border crossing, the Liberal delegation believes that transmigration has been a minor factor, if one at all. He stressed that the threats and scaremongering by small rebel elements in Irian Jaya between February 1984 and March 1984 were clearly the principal reasons for the border crossings."

As appropriate, ways and means to solve any bilateral questions have been established and recently consolidated by the signing and ratification of a Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship and Co-operation between Indonesia and PNG. It is the firm conviction of the Government of Indonesia that any matters pertaining to its bilateral relations with the Government of PNG can be solved in a peaceful and friendly manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.